

Expanding High Quality Options for All Students



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The Purposes of Education and Choice in a Democracy

1

**Improving
student
learning
opportunities**

2

**Preparing
students for
college,
careers, and
civic
engagement**

3

**Ensuring that
students get
the kind of
education
they need**

4

**Integrating
our diverse
citizenry**

Benefits & Challenges of Choice

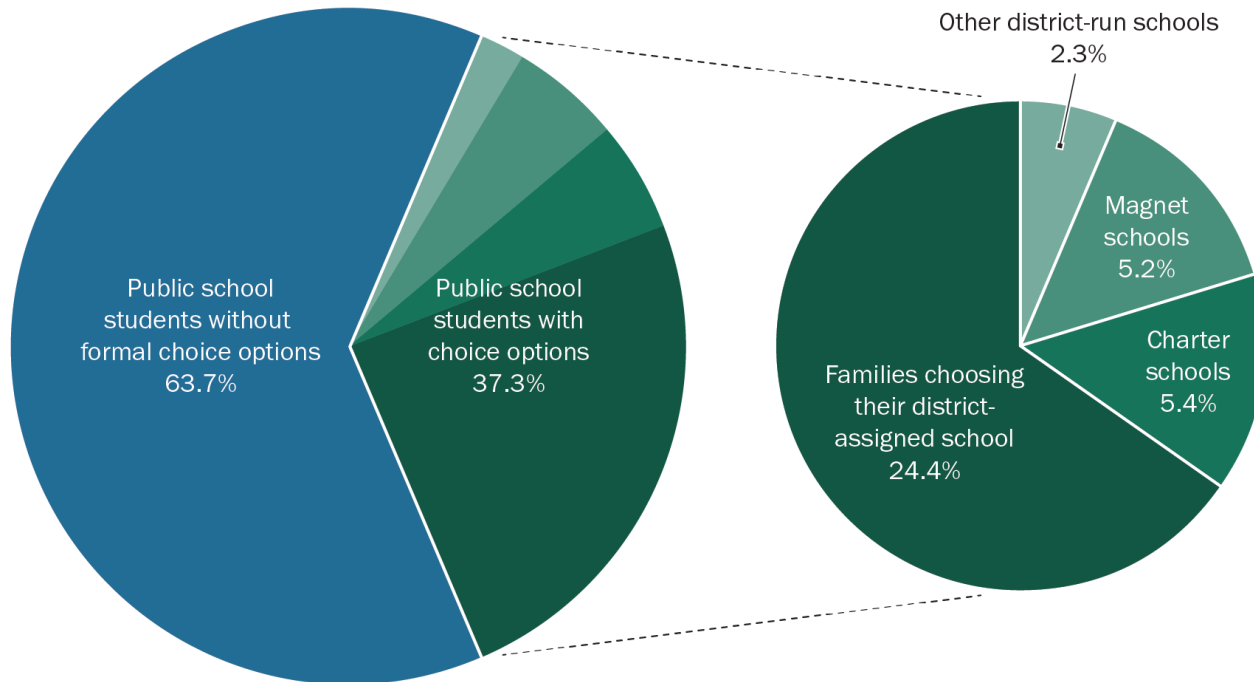
- **Opportunities to innovate**
- **Fit with children's needs & interests**
- **Options can raise quality**
- **Buy-in strengthens commitment**
- **Quality is not guaranteed**
- **Access can be unequal**
- **Transportation can be costly and difficult**
- **If unmanaged, segregation can increase**

What Kinds of Educational Choices Exist in the U.S.?



Public School Choices, 2013–2014

Percentage of students



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of education statistics: 2015*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/ch_2.asp; National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). *Digest of education statistics: 2016*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_216.20.asp.

Intra- district choice

22 states allow / encourage

Many districts offer choice among all schools (e.g. NY, SF, Cambridge, Boston, Milwaukee, Minneapolis)

- Sometimes managed to support integration
- District role varies
- Positive outcomes found for NYC schools launched as part of a school redesign effort
- Fewer gains in Milwaukee where the district role was less focused on quality

Inter- district choice

25 states allow / encourage

Major plans in MN and CO

(**> 5%** of students participate)

**6 metro areas have plans
specific to desegregation.**

Research finds

- Reduced achievement gaps
- Better racial attitudes
- Increased attainment for students of color

Magnet Schools

2.6 million students

Most are inter-district

\$97 million federal funds

Research finds positive effects on

- student achievement,
- graduation rates,
- student motivation,
- satisfaction with school,
- intergroup relationships,
- teacher motivation and morale,
- parent satisfaction with the school.

Networks of School Models

**Distinct philosophy
District-run and / or
charter-operated**

**E.G., Montessori, Waldorf,
Expeditionary Learning (150
schools, 33 states)**

**New Tech Network (190 schools,
118 districts)**

- MDRC and AIR studies of new small schools and “deeper learning” models found stronger achievement and graduation rates

Dual Credit/ Early College

15,000 high schools (80%) offer dual credit courses to 1.3 million student

State policies re: participation and reimbursement vary

240 Early College High Schools Offer up to 2 years of college coursework

Research finds EC students are more likely to:

- graduate from high school,
- enroll in college,
- complete college.

Charter Schools

2.7 million students in 44 states

87% non-profit; 13% for-profit

**> 2500 charters closed since 2001
(nearly 40% of those started)**

**Mixed results re: achievement,
stability, & students served are
related to differing state policies**

- # of authorizers**
- regulations regarding
curriculum, teacher qualifications,
financial viability, accountability**
- regulations regarding access and
retention**

Virtual Schools

82% of virtual schools are charters, most are for-profit.

Two for-profit companies account for > 60% of all virtual school students.

-- CREDO study found virtual charters have far lower achievement in both math and reading than traditional public schools serving similar students.

-- 87% of virtual schools were identified by NCES as low graduation rate schools in 2013-14

-- Average graduation rate was 40%, less than half the national average rate (82%).

Massachusetts' Charter Law

Charters are high-performing

- **One authorizer: state education agency**
- **Only non-profits**
- **Expectations for curriculum & staffing quality, as well as academic performance**
- **Plans and monitoring for admission and retention of EIs & students with disabilities**
- **Renewal at 5 years requires fidelity to charter, academic success, organizational viability, and recruitment and retention of high-need students.**

Vouchers, Tax Credits/ Deductions, Education Savings Accounts

14 states + DC: vouchers

8 states tax credits/ deductions

4 states Ed. Savings Accounts

-- States vary in level of support, degree of regulation & eligibility of students

-- Some programs focus on services for students with disabilities; others for low-income students, some universal

-- 4 recent studies found negative effects of vouchers on achievement (LA, IN, DC)

Home Schooling

1.8 million students

50 states + DC

- Disproportionately white, nonpoor, and rural
- Reasons for home schooling focus on school environment, safety, religion
- States vary greatly in degree of regulation & oversight
- Students from more structured settings do better than those from less structured settings
- Those from relatively affluent households achieve well in ELA, less well in math / science
- Significantly fewer students attend college than in the public schools.

Policy Considerations

1. Intra-district and Inter-district Choice

- Provide for high-quality neighborhood schools
- Support quality, innovation, integration, access

2. Dual credit and Early College

- Encourage college – school partnerships
- Fund course credits

3. Charter schools

- Limit authorizers with strong accountability
- Set standards for quality with regular review
- Monitor access, recruitment, retention
- Consider special oversight of virtual schools
- Limit profit-making that undermines quality

Policy Considerations

4. Vouchers, Tax Credits, ESAs

- Maintain standards of quality for recipients through accreditation, teacher qualifications, curriculum and assessment information.
- Ensure non-discrimination standards on the basis of race, class, gender and sexual orientation, and disability status for schools that are recipients of funds.
- Fund options that advance state purposes, like the provision of specialized high-quality services to students with disabilities or the provision of \$ for advanced study (e.g. AP courses) otherwise unavailable to students.

Policy Considerations

5. Home Schooling

- Require registration or application, so that students not enrolled in school are under educational care.
- Require evidence of a structured program of study that covers key aspects of curriculum, minimal qualifications from instructors, and regular assessment of learning.
- Provide financial support for districts that include home schooled students in aspects of the curriculum, students services, or extracurricular activities.

The Goal of Choice



“What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy ... Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up, can society by any chance be true to itself.”

-- John Dewey, *School & Society*